

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY SANA

S E C R E T JIDDA 4823

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, SA, YE, YS

SUBJECT: WHAT NEXT FROM THE YEMENS? SOME POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
FOR USG

REF: (A) JIDDA 4704 (B) JIDDA 4770

1. SUMMARY: INDICATIONS OF GROWING SAG CONCERN AND POSSIBLE
ACTIONS BECAUSE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN PDRY MAY POSE DIFFICULT
POLICY QUESTIONS FOR USG. END SUMMARY.

2. WE SENSE INCREASING CONCERN AND TENSION WITHIN SAG BE-
CAUSE OF RECENT EVENTS IN NORTH AND SOUTH YEMEN. THE SAUDIS
OBVIOUSLY FEEL THAT THE ASSASSINATION OF GHASHMI AND THE
EXECUTION OF RUBAI ALI ARE A PART OF AN
OVERALL SOVEIT-INSPIRED PLAN ULTIMATELY DIRECTED AT THEM.
THEY SEEM CONVENCED THAT ANOTHER SHOE WILL DROP AND MAY WELL
BE MAKING PLANS TO HEAD OFF THE NEXT STEP OR COUNTER IT WITH
SPEED AND FORCE.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE INDICATORS:

(1) A CONTINUING FULL STATUS ALERT OF ALL ARMED

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FORCES HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO INSTRUCTORS IN THE VARIOUS
SERVICE SCHOOLS AS WELL AS KEEPING PILOTS ON FLIGHT LINE
ALERT;

(2) ACTIVITIES OF PRINCE TURKI AL FAISAL. HE IS
CONTINUEING TO EMERGE AS A KEY PERSON IN SAG WITH RESPON-
SIBILITIES AXCEEDING HIS DUTIES AS CHEIF OF GENERAL

INTELLIGENCE DIRECTORATE. HE WAS THE KING'S SPOKESMAN TO AMBASSADORS AND INTELLIGENCE CHIEFS ON 25 JUNE (REFTEL A), HOWEVER, FONMIN SAUD WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY AT THE TIME WITH CROWN PRINCE FAHD. IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER HE VISITED THE FOLLOWING CAPITOLS:

CAIRO, DAMASCUS, AMMAN. HE IS CURRENTLY IN BAGHDAD AND EXPECTED TO GO TO KHARTOUM TOMMORROW. HE SPOKE TO US AS KING'S REPRESENTATIVE AND UNDOUBTEDLY IS PLAYING SAME ROLE IN HIS TRAVELS.

INTELLIGENCE REPORTS LEAD US TO BELIEVE THAT HE IS SOUNDING OUT SENTIMENT AND POSSIBLY SOLICITING SUPPORT FOR EFFORT TO COUNTER ANY PDRY INITIATIVES. HE MAY ALSO BE ASSESSING WHAT SUPPORT MAY BE PRESENT FOR INITIATIVES AGAINST PDRY BEFORE NEXTSHOE DROPS. PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT IS VISIT TO BAGHDAD AS IRAQI ABSTENTION FROM ANY ARAB-DIRECTED ACTION AGAINST PDRY WOULD PROBABLY BE CRUCIAL.

(3) IN ADDITION, SAG HAS BEEN IN CLOSE COMMUNICATION WITH IRAN; AMBASSADOR TO IRAN WAS FIRST FOREIGN REPRESENTATIVE TO MEET WITH PRINCE TURKI ON 25 JUNE; ON 26 JUNE IRANIAN AMBASSADOR WAS CALLED TO RIYADH FOR MEETING WITH PRINCE SULTAN; WE THINK SAUDIS WOULD NOT CONSIDER ANY AGGRESSIVE ACTION AGAINST PDRY WITHOUT FULL BACKING OF IRANIANS.

3. ANY ACTION IN YEMENS, WHETHER PREDEPITATED BY PDRY
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OR OTHERWISE, WILL PROBABLY SPARK SUBSTANTIAL SAUDI PARTICIPATION EITHER OPENLY OR COVERTLY, WITH RESULTING QUESTIONS FOR USG SUCH AS:

(1) TO WHAT EXTENT WILL WE PERMIT FMS EQUIPMENT FURNISHED SAUDIS TO BE TRANSFERRED OR USED AGAINST PDRY;

(2) IN THE EVENT OF SAUDI MILITARY INVOLVEMENT, WHAT ROLE, IF ANY, CAN OR SHOULD BE PLAYED BY U.S. MILITARY ADVISORS AND U.S. CONTRACTORS WHO SUPPORT SAG FORCES;

(3) SAUDIS HAVE ALREADY INDICATED (REFTELS) THAT THEY EXPECT SOLID U.S. SUPPORT AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY REQUEST SAME FOR OVERT OR COVERT ACTIONS AGAINST YAR. CONSIDERING STRONG SOVIET PRESENCE IN PDRY, WE DOUBT SAUDIS WOULD PARTICIPATE IN DIRECT ACTIVITIES AGAINST PDRY WITHOUT U.S. SUPPORT. WHAT ARE WE GOING TO TELL THEM?
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